Wicked
The Untold Story of the Witches of Oz
Secondary English
Key Stage 3 & 4
This pack is designed as a starting point for curriculum-based activities for English students at Key Stage 3, providing ideas for lessons inspired by Wicked.

Key Stage 4 teachers may find it a good starting point for new curriculum-based work.

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**WRITE A WICKED REVIEW**

Most new productions are reviewed by the press, in the newspaper, on the radio or online. As a class, examine a newspaper or online review of another production. Look at the structure of the review. How much is fact, setting the context of the production, or telling the story, and how much is the opinion of the reviewer? How does 1 review differ from another of the same production? Introduce the idea of the star rating.

Ask students to write a newspaper or online review of the production, ensuring there is a balance between setting the context for the production, examining the characters and the story, and their own opinion.

It may be helpful for them to think about including the following in their review: acting, singing, dancing, costume, set design, music, audience reaction, overall impact.

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**WICKED ORIGINAL WRITING**

**Short Story**

Wicked is a book which was written when then author imagined what had happened before the story of The Wizard of Oz. Now, ask students to imagine what happened before Wicked. Choose one of the following scenarios to describe, and write a short story about a day in this time and place.

- Life at Shiz University
- Life in Oz
- Elphaba’s childhood
- Glinda’s childhood
- Boq’s childhood

**Diary entry**

Imagine you are Elphaba, Glinda, Boq, Nessarose or Fiyero the night of the Ozdust Ball, where Elphaba comes in wearing Glinda’s hat. Write the character’s diary entry for that night.

**Script Writing**

Create the script for a scene which is “missing” from Wicked. Choose one of the following, or create one of your own:

- Nessarose, Elphaba and her father travel together to Shiz University
- Glinda introduces Elphaba to her parents
- Fiyero confides in one of his friends that he has feelings for Elphaba
Character Analysis

As a class, look at the characters of Elphaba, Glinda, Fiyero, Boq and Nessarose. In groups, ask students to draw a simple outline of the character on a large sheet of paper. Within the outline, write qualities which are internal qualities of the character, those which they might feel about themselves. Outside the outline, list how other people perceive them.

Use these sheets to write a paragraph character description about each character.
Extension Exercise

Ask students in groups to examine how the characters’ qualities or personalities change as the play progresses, and fill in 3 sheets per character charting this change. For example:

Elphaba:  At the beginning of the play
When she goes into hiding
At the end of the play

Glinda:  At the beginning of the play
When she becomes Glinda the Good
At the end of the play

As a class, discuss this progression of the characters, and how each character relates to the other at each of these phases in the story.

Textual Analysis

Refer to Act One Scene Nine in the Script Extracts Pack

Analyse the first script extract provided in the pack, when Elphaba and Fiyero rescue the lion cub and find themselves alone in the woods. Just before this scene in the play, Elphaba and Fiyero are in the classroom and see Dr Dillamond being arrested. Oz officials take over the class, and tell the students that animals should be locked up. They have a lion cub in a cage, in distress. Elphaba, upset and angry, inadvertently casts a spell which affects everyone else in the classroom except her and Fiyero. They free the lion cub and run away...

Answer the following questions:
• Using your own words, explain what happens in this scene
• What impression do you get about Fiyero’s feelings for Elphaba from the text?
• Why does Fiyero say “Do you ever let anyone else talk”?
• What title would you give this scene?
• What tone is Elphaba using when she says: “No! Not really stupid.” How does the use of italics here help to convey this meaning?
• How is Fiyero feeling when he says...
• What is Elphaba referring to when she asks: “You think I don’t know how much easier my life would be if I didn’t?”
• There is music which underscores this scene, what type of music would you use to enhance the atmosphere of the scene and why do you choose it?

Now, students should turn the extract into a piece of descriptive prose, using their knowledge of the characters and the setting to describe the action and the background of the scene, using speech marks to delineate characters’ dialogue. Students shouldn’t feel they need to include all the dialogue in the scene, some might be implied. Students can also use their character descriptions to add in how the characters are feeling or what they’re thinking during the scene.

How does the scene differ in impact now it is a piece of prose?
**WICKED ADAPTATION**

*Wicked* is a novel you know which was adapted into a musical. What book would you like to adapt? Choose whether you would like to adapt it into a film or a theatre show (play or musical.) Re-read the first five chapters and think about how you would want to start your script, what would be a good opening scene?

*Wicked* begins at the end of the story, with Glinda telling everyone the Wicked Witch is dead. Then we go back in time and see Elphaba's story for real. You may want to use this device, or just start at the beginning of your story.

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**WICKED NEWS**

**Oz Journalism**

Imagine you are a news reporter in Oz. Write newspaper article about one of the following news items:

- Dr Dillamond losing his job at the school
- Flying Monkeys are first spotted in Oz
- Glinda becomes Glinda the Good and Elphaba becomes the Wicked Witch
- When Wicked Witch of the West Dies

You may want to put all the articles together and create an Oz Newspaper, complete with adverts, fun stories and Oz celebrity news!

**Human Rights**

In *Wicked*, Dr Dillamond (a goat) has a good job and is respected, before the Wizard of Oz decides to persecute the animals and he is taken away and imprisoned, finally losing his voice. He is one of many animals who encounters this fate in the story.

Think about what happens to Dr Dillamond, and how he was affected. Now, ask students to think about real people from history, or from the present day: who might be comparable figure they can think of?

Students should research this person or people and create a mini-presentation on what happened to them, including how and why they were persecuted.

**Creating A Campaign**

In the play, we see Dr Dillamond and other animals persecuted, with their rights taken away. He is told “Animals Should be Seen and Not Heard.”

In groups, ask students to create the campaign for the Rights of the Animals in Oz. Examples of activities they could create include:

- Creating slogans
- Writing newspaper articles
- Interviewing each other in role as the Animals
- Creating banners and posters
- Staging a march through the school for the campaign
- Write a letter to their local newspaper or MP about the injustices
Every theatre production is marketed in its own way. Ask students to brainstorm the different ways of marketing a theatre production.

Look at some of the resources used to advertise Wicked.

Ask the following questions:
- How is the advertising eye-catching?
- Who do you think the advertising is trying to appeal to?
- Highlight words and phrases that try to persuade readers to buy tickets – is there a slogan which helps?
- How does the graphic design help to sell the production?
  Think about the use of colour, font, image and digital effects.

Working on their own, students should now create a new flyer for Wicked. What would it look like? What information should be included? How would you describe the production in a way which makes people want to see it?

There are some big moral questions which are raised in Wicked. Discuss the following themes as a class. Set the class on researching both sides of each of the following questions, looking at how they are related in the play, and what the class think of them:

Are people born Wicked or do they have Wickedness thrust upon them?

Propaganda or Truth – what can we believe?